

# THE BEACONview

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA Office of the STATE CONTROLLER

## GROUP ONE AGENCIES GO-LIVE, GROUP TWO SET FOR April 1

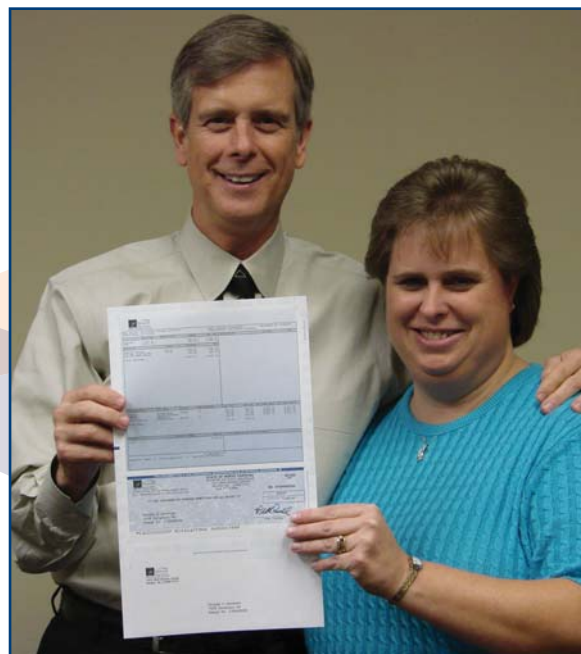
North Carolina has started an historic upgrade of its business systems as nearly 19,000 state employees shifted from three outdated systems to the BEACON Human Resources/Payroll system. All employees of the Department of Transportation and temporary employees of other inaugural agencies began using the new system December 17. Full-time employees of the initial agencies began using the BEACON system on January 2.

The \$76 million project, which has been in the planning and development phases for five years, replaces the State's personnel system and two payroll systems that have operated for more than 25 years. These systems went into service before the invention of the personal computer, the mouse or Windows software.

"Because of the efforts of hundreds of committed state employees, we are excited to go-live with our HR/Payroll system according to schedule," said State Controller Robert Powell, who chaired the steering committee that oversaw development of the new system. "The BEACON HR/Payroll System moves North Carolina into the 21st Century, not only in technology but in updating and standardizing its business processes to conform with best practices used in the private sector."

After three months of fine tuning, another 66,000 state employees in both large and small agencies will be brought into the system.

The BEST Shared Services Center, which includes a centralized help desk and processing center, averaged about 222 calls a day in the days after all of the initial agencies switched to BEACON, said Herb Henderson, the center's director. The call volume increased to 333 calls on January 9, 427 calls on January 10, and 609 calls on January 11, the first day paychecks were distributed using the new system.



State Controller Robert L. Powell and OSC Payroll and Time Manager Wendy Griffin hold the first check generated by the BEACON system.

"We had the expectation that the calls would increase as we approached payday," Henderson said. "And they were the kind of calls we expected: needing help to gain access to the Employee Self Service system so they could see their pay stubs, help with their NCID (a security system for state IT applications), and calls from folks wanting to know how to perform specific functions in SAP (the technological backbone for the system)."

"It was extremely, extremely busy in the call center," he said. "But the system worked well and the tools we use worked well. I would rate it as a great success. Everybody got paid that should have been paid."

Several glitches affecting small groups of employees were reported and fixed on the first payday, he said, but none that left employees unpaid.

**See Go-Live.....Page 2**



*"BEACON is about providing employees with new tools and information to better manage their work, their personal information and their careers."*

— State Controller  
Robert L. Powell

### Deployment Group II (April 2008)

Administrative Office  
of the Courts  
Dept. of Agriculture  
Dept. of Commerce  
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Dept. of Crime Control  
& Public Safety  
Dept. of Cultural Resources  
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& Natural Resources  
Dept. of Insurance  
Dept. of Justice  
Dept. of Juvenile Justice  
Dept. of Labor  
Dept. of Public Instruction  
Office of Secretary of State  
Dept. of State Treasurer  
Dept. of Health  
& Human Services  
Employment Security Commission  
NC Education  
Lottery Commission  
NC Community College System  
NC School of Science & Math  
Office of Administrative Hearings  
Office of State Auditor  
State Health Plan  
Wildlife Resources Commission  
Board of Cosmetic Arts

# REVAMPED BEACON TRAINING TEAM OFF TO STRONG START

An old Chinese proverb suggests that if you give a man a fish you feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. Teaching has been one of the main focus areas for the BEACON HR/Payroll project team. Prior to the successful January 2 Group One go-live, BEACON trainers taught more than 550 core users how to navigate and use the new human resources and payroll system.


Now as members of the project's functional, technical and deployment teams work toward the April 1 go-live date for Group Two agencies, the training team has its focus set on delivering more than 52,000 hours of training to 2,583 core users through 1,136 classes.

In addition to the core user curriculum, the training team has developed four online courses for the State's 80,000 end users to take to familiarize themselves with the project and how to navigate and use the BEACON portal. To date, more than 11,000 end users have accessed the ESS portal.

While developing and delivering training leading up to the first go-live, the training team learned a few lessons of its own. In December, a new training lead was brought in to design more efficient processes and procedures. Additionally, agency training agents were given the responsibility to make adjustments to their respective agency's employees' training schedules.

The impact of these changes was felt immediately, with Group Two training schedules getting finalized the last week of December. Also, the core user individual training schedules were distributed on schedule in early January.

Group Two core users began taking classes on January 22 and will continue through the April 1 go-live date. Currently there are 31 courses that range in duration from two hours to two days.

With the positive training changes that have already occurred, the entire project team is confident that the Group Two training activities will provide core users and end users alike with the skills they need to use the system beginning in April. 

## Go-Live.....from Page 1

The project combines payroll functions and personnel information in a centralized system that will be operated by the Office of the State Controller. The new system replaces outdated technology that had become increasingly difficult to maintain, and provides basic payroll and personnel functions that previously had to be duplicated across state agencies.

The new system also allows state employees, for the first time, to update their personal and benefits information, check previous payroll data and record their working time from most computers with an Internet connection.

The HR/payroll system uses a technology framework from SAP that ties agency information together in a single network. The SAP software also allows for future business operations to be added to the central system. The General Assembly already has approved funding to add electronic recruiting,

which will keep track of state job applicants; and electronic training, which will handle a number of training-related functions, to the new system.


Planning has started on the next phase of the project, which will add budgeting, accounting and cash management functions. When completed, the BEACON system will provide centralized, coordinated business operations that can improve efficiency and provide timely, accurate information for decision-makers and the public.

In addition to planning, designing and building this new business system, the BEACON project also involves training for more than 3,000 core users in agency business offices, more than 3,100 employees who will use reports and information generated by the new system and nearly 8,000 managers who will use the system for reports to track the work of their employees.

"This has been the most massive

effort I have seen undertaken by state government in my 35 years as a North Carolina state employee," Powell said. "The level of cooperation by agencies and employees is unprecedented. Our partners in this project -- Information Technology Services, the Office of State Personnel, the Office of State Budget and Management, and DOT -- have been strong participants. Together we have spent countless hours developing a system that will provide the next generation of business operations for the State."

The State's existing personnel and payroll systems will continue to operate until all agencies, including universities, have rolled off the system and all necessary historical data has been transferred.

Full details on the BEACON program are available on the Office of the State Controller website at [www.beacon.nc.gov](http://www.beacon.nc.gov). 


## Do Not Delay, AUTHENTICATE Today To access the BEACON portal, visit <https://mybeacon.nc.gov>.

On your first visit to the BEACON portal, you must authenticate your account. To do this:

1. Log on using your NCID and password
2. You will see a message that reads:  
"SAP ID Activation Required. Please activate your id now!"
3. Click on the word "activate" in the message
4. On the new screen enter your NCID and password again
5. Click Start Activation button
6. Enter your date of birth in the appropriate field
7. Enter the last five digits of your SSN in the appropriate field
8. Click Submit button
9. You should see the message "Activation Success!"
10. Close your browser
11. Open a new browser and go to <https://mybeacon.nc.gov>
12. Log in using your NCID and password
13. You will only need to enter your NCID and password on subsequent visits to the portal

**Note:** If you experience problems authenticating your account, call the BEST (BEACON Enterprise Support Team) Shared Services Center anytime from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at 919-707-0707 if local to Raleigh, or 1-866-NCBEST4U statewide.

When Group Two agency employees visit the portal **after the April 1 go-live date**, they will be able to, among other things, make changes to their personal data such as: home address, bank account information, dependent information and benefits. Managers will be able to approve their employees' time and vacation requests.

Prior to go-live, all Group Two employees are encouraged to take the BEACON overview course, two Employee Self Service (ESS) courses (overview and time entry) and, if applicable, the Manager Self Service course online at [www.beacon.nc.gov/training](http://www.beacon.nc.gov/training). As a reminder, Group Two agency employees will not be able to conduct transactions within the system until April 1. 

As of Feb. 29,  
there are  
**31 days**  
until Group Two  
Agencies Go-Live  
on the BEACON  
HR/Payroll  
System

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
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